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**INFORMATION FOR EVALUATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

**- For Members of Off-Site Reaffirmation Committees -**

**Logistics of the Visit**

1. ***Arrival and departure times***. All committee members are expected to arrive in time for the organizational meeting of the committees beginning at 9:00 a.m. on the first day, to be prompt for all meetings set by the Chair, and to remain through the conclusion of the review of all institutions in the Cluster. Please refer to the arrival and departure dates and times described on the Housing Reservation Form. If there are likely to be any problems in these regards, please notify the Staff Coordinator of your Cluster at your earliest opportunity.

You will be reimbursed for all expenses incurred during the time period in Atlanta while you are conducting the work of SACSCOC. Expenses associated with early arrivals and late departures, including hotel, meals, etc, *are* ***not reimbursable*** even if savings in airfare can be realized.

2. ***Reimbursement of expenses for Off-Site Reviews***. You will be provided with an expense voucher to file for reimbursement of your expenses. SACSCOC reimburses committee members for expenses associated with travel to and from Atlanta, meals during the visit not included during the meeting, and local transportation. Hotel accommodations and parking are pre-arranged to be billed to the SACSCOC’s master account.

Expenses such as kennel fees, baby-sitting fees, laundry expenses, alcoholic beverages, bar bills, or movies are not reimbursed. Please do not submit such expenses or allow these to be direct billed to SACSCOC as part of hotel charges. SACSCOC policies provide for a few non-lengthy calls to be considered allowable expenses (e.g., phone calls to your institution or short calls home). Calls that will be submitted for reimbursement should be kept to a minimum.

Please submit the completed expense voucher within seven days after the visit. Attach the original copy of all receipts, including those for meals not provided by SACSCOC. You will receive a check for your expenses, plus a $100.00 allowance for miscellaneous expenses, normally within two weeks after submission of the voucher.

3. ***Travel arrangements***. You are expected to make your own travel arrangements to and from Atlanta using the arrival and departure dates and times described on the Housing Reservation Form.

Flying to Atlanta. If you fly into Atlanta’s Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport, the actual cost of your airfare (coach class) will be reimbursed. Individuals choosing to fly first class must assume the responsibility of paying the difference (*not reimbursable*) between first class and coach class fare. Transportation to/from the hotel is described in the document on meeting logistics sent to committee members.

\*Please note that expenses associated with flight changes are not reimbursable.

Driving to Atlanta. Driving directions to the hotel and transportation to/from the hotel are described in the document on logistics sent to committee members. You may drive and be reimbursed at the currently approved rate for *actual mileage driven*, a total not to exceed normal coach airfare plus ground transportation (limo, cab, personal car to the airport). It is often less expensive to drive than to fly, unless you have obtained a discount airfare. Mileage and expenses for lodging, food, etc. accumulated as a result of personal tourist or personal business activity (costs not related to the committee visit) are not reimbursable.

Rental cars. SACSCOC policies discourage the renting of automobiles for committee travel. If you feel it might be necessary for you to rent an automobile for travel to and from Atlanta, please consult with a SACSCOC staff member before making such arrangements. If you fly into Atlanta and rent a car for local transportation, the cost of the rental car *is not reimbursable.*

4. ***Lodging reservations***. SACSCOC staff will make hotel reservations for you following receipt of your completed Housing Reservation Form. Please do not make your own reservations, because the SACSCOC will submit the roster of those on the master account to the hotel.

5. ***Questions.*** If you have questions concerning your responsibilities, both the committee Chair and the SACSCOC staff member will be available to consult with you by phone before the visit.

**Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest for Evaluation Committee Members**

If a committee member has accepted an invitation to serve on the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee, it means that the committee member has agreed to adhere to conflict of interest and confidentiality provisions of the Commission policy “Ethical Obligations and Responsibilities Specific to Peer Evaluators.” Below is an excerpt.

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| ***Confidentiality***  Evaluators, including lead QEP evaluators, must maintain complete confidentiality in all accreditation activities and decisions. Confidentiality applies to all documents, correspondence, and discussions relative to all phases of the review. Moreover, peer evaluators are expected to maintain confidentiality regarding input from the staff just as they do regarding all other discussions conducted in the review process.  As examples, ***evaluators may not disclose to anyone the following:***   1. *information about an institutional case under review, including the analysis of institutional materials; committee discussions before and during the meeting; and the resource material constituting the case* 2. *information distributed by Commission staff and oral comments by staff* 3. *findings and recommendations of the committee* 4. *former decisions of the Committees on Compliance and Reports or of the Executive Council that may have been shared as part of the record for review* 5. *rationale for a committee recommendation pertaining to an institution*   Without a commitment to confidentiality by all evaluators and in all aspects of the review process, peer evaluators cannot freely execute their responsibility to conduct themselves with professional integrity in accreditation activities and decisions.  ***Conflict of Interest***  Commission policies provide appropriate safeguards against conflict of interest in arriving at accrediting decisions. Evaluators, including lead QEP evaluators, should not accept appointment to a review committee where conflict of interest, or the appearance of conflict of interest, exists. The Commission relies on the personal and professional integrity of individual committee members, expects them to be sensitive to potential conflicts of interest in the peer review process, and assumes they will act accordingly. If it is discovered that a conflict of interest situation may have significantly affected the evaluation of an institution by a visiting committee, the Chair of the Commission may ask that a further evaluation of the institution be initiated to determine the validity of the original findings of the visiting committee.  As examples, an evaluator would have a conflict of interest if he or she   1. is employed within a state where the parent campus of the institution is located; 2. has been a consultant at the institution within the last ten years; 3. has been an appointee of the institution within the last ten years (e.g., board member); 4. has been an employee of the institution; 5. has been a candidate for employment at the institution within the last ten years; 6. is a graduate of the institution; 7. has a close personal or familial relationship with persons at the institution or a strong bias regarding the institution; 8. is a stockholder or board member of the institution; 9. has any other relationship that could serve as an impediment to rendering an impartial, objective professional judgment regarding the accreditation of an institution; or   10. is a Board of Trustee member and has been invited to serve as chair or member of an evaluation committee scheduled to review the institution of another Board member.  Members of review committees must not give advice to or consult with the visited institution, in relation to any issues contained in the follow-up responses or monitoring reports submitted by the institution, until initial action has been taken by the Commission in connection with these issues.  A committee member who violates this policy will not be used as an evaluator in the future.  An institution is expected to respect the integrity of the accreditation process by not engaging any team member as a consultant, paid or unpaid, or as an employee for this period of time.  *Conflict of Interest and Undue Influence.* An evaluator is expected to contact Commission staff when an attempt is made to influence the evaluator’s judgment or to influence an impending review. Examples of undue influence might include:   1. In advance of an off-site review, an evaluator is contacted by representatives of the institution to discuss the upcoming off-site evaluation; 2. A supervisor attempts to influence an evaluator reporting to the supervisor regarding an upcoming institutional review; and 3. In advance of an on-site review, an evaluator is contacted by representatives of the institution to discuss the upcoming on-site evaluation for reasons other than providing requested additional information or clarification.   ***Obligations Regarding Publicly-Traded Institutions***  Institutions accredited by SACSCOC may be publicly traded corporations or may be owned by publicly traded corporations. The actions that SACSCOC may take concerning these institutions may affect the stock price of these corporations. This fact necessarily imposes certain obligations on SACSCOC Board Members, Staff, and Volunteers. A copy of this policy will be provided to all SACSCOC Board Members, Officers, Employees, and Volunteers upon their appointment, employment, or service.  **Definitions**  Publicly Traded Institution. A Publicly Traded Institution is a corporation that is or that owns an educational institution which is a member of or candidate for accreditation by SACSCOC, the stock of which is traded on any public stock exchange.    Immediate Family. An individual’s immediate family includes spouse, children, and parents.    Direct or Beneficial Ownership. Direct or beneficial ownership includes ownership in one’s name individually, through a closely held corporation or family partnership, by an individual retirement account or similar retirement vehicle, or by a trust. An individual is not considered a direct or beneficial owner of stock if that individual owns mutual funds that may own stock in a publicly traded institution. An individual is not considered a direct or beneficial owner of stock if that individual’s employer holds stock of a publicly traded institution in its endowment.  Persons Subject to this Policy. Persons subject to this policy are SACSCOC Board Members, Officers, Employees, Volunteers, and their Attorneys.  **Obligations**    *Obligations concerning publicly traded institutions the stock of which is owned by individuals.* No person who is subject to this policy may take any action or serve in any capacity concerning a publicly traded Institution the stock of which the individual or the individual’s immediate family owns directly or beneficially.  *Obligations concerning publicly traded institutions subject to action by SACSCOC.*  No person who is subject to this policy may disclose to any person who is not subject to this policy any information concerning any action or proposed action by SACSCOC concerning a publicly traded institution except through a means that makes the disclosure available to the general public at the same time; provided however, that SACSCOC may disclose such action or proposed action to representatives of the publicly traded institution in advance of the public disclosure.  *Obligations of SACSCOC staff***.** SACSCOC staff shall make available to persons subject to this policy at least annually a list of all publicly traded institutions.  ***Participation Responsibilities of Peer Evaluators***  When accepting an appointment to serve, a peer evaluator agrees to the following responsibilities:   1. ***Meeting Attendance***. All evaluators are expected to arrive and depart on the dates and at the times specified by committee chairs or SACSCOC staff. They are expected to participate in all scheduled meetings and conference calls.      1. ***Assignments***. All evaluators are expected to analyze an institution’s compliance with specific accreditation standards, formulate recommendations or statements of committee findings, and write draft narrative that reflects the consensus of the committee. Fulfilling this responsibility requires completion of reading assignments, communication with other committee members and SACSCOC staff, and professional conduct in executing the work of the Commission.   All committee members work under the leadership of the committee chair. |

*Updated: February 2019*